2/14/71

Dear Harold,

With spme time to spare, I can respond to your most recent mailings.

Many thanks for the postage scale. It is certainly sufficient for my needs.

Congradulations on the FRAME-Up review in Pub. Weekly. Will take it to some book stores around here as you request. You could hardly expect a better review.

I'm having a hard time getting the Schles book. University bookstore will have in 2 weeks. No others have in stock, and currently out at library. Agreed on Sorenson. He paints a picture of the mood of the administration--its general thinking--up to 63. I'm holding off on Salinger, but am reading Hilsman now.

Speaking of Hilsman, I think you got the wrong impression from my initial comments. His being liberal is not relevant, at least to the question of sincerity or honesty. After reading a little more in his book, I begin to see what you mean. His account of his terrific blunder during the missile crisis is presented as a silly little faux pas, but obviously it was a serious error. I tend to agree with you that he should have left then. Certainly, I should do my own interpretting. Of course, I run into the difficulties of being relatively new at this, and do not want to miss important things or put too much into the unimportant.

The thing that struck me as I began Hilsman (which I had picked up in Sorenson, in less detail), was JFK's attitude toward the NSC, how he wanted to take power away from it, which meant cutting the CIA and the military, putting more emphasis on political solutions through Dept. of State. If anyhting could have impressed on him the need for this, it was the Bay of Pigs.

One of the things that's been bothering me with so much to do re JFK is the work which must be done re LBJ. I'm glad you suggested the one book. The whole political "context" of the assassination is lost, as I see it, if LBJ pursued the sames things as JFK. My impression now is that he did not, and how he didn't is vitally important. We will have to talk, so perhaps I will call you some eveing next week.

Some things of interest from the NYT, around before JFK was killed. On 11/14/63, the Pentagon announced plans to bring home 3 tactical air transport squadrons based in Evreux, France. I don't know what significance, if any, this has.

On 11/11/63, Stevenson, speaking at the UN, called on the US to "follow a foreign policy that risked displeasing right-wing groups despite the influence the groups might exert in Congress."

On 11/17/63, Gov, Rockefeller launched a massive attack on JFK foreign policy, saying it had no orientation and followed no plan.

On the question of whether JFK would have continued with withdrawal in light of the "stepped up Cong activity," I've found some other stuff which compels me quite strongly to believe that he would: pardon me, he did!

On Oct. 3, Rusk did not say that 1000 men would be taken out by the end of the year. He said that if things go right, 1000 men could be taken out. At his 11/14/63 news conference, JFK was asked if the Diem overthrow would affect US plans and he said no. When asked about the withdrawal, he said this would still go ahead although the upcoming meeting in Honolulu would determine the number. On 11/16/63, the NYT carried a headline that 1000 troops would leave by end of year. Maj. Gen. Charles Timmes announded the withdrawal and said that major US involvement would end by Dec '65.

Must go now.

Best,

Howard